

Message Text

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51

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 9344

E. O. 11652: GDS-1981

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SUBJECT: US/ GKR/ GVN TRIPARTITE MEETINGS

1. WE UNDERSTAND SUBJECT OF EXPANSION TRIPARTITE MEETINGS TO INCLUDE RTG IN QUADRIpartite ARRANGEMENT IS AGAIN BEING CONSIDERED. WHILE MISSION IS NOT AWARE OF ANY PRESSING REASON OR MILITARY RECOMMENDATIONS TO REVIVE PROPOSAL, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THE SUBJECT OF RTG PARTICIPATION WAS DISCUSSED BY POMIL COUNSELOR WITH LTG KRIANGSAK (SCH FWD) ON 5 APRIL 1973. FOLLOWING IS MEMCON OF THAT CONVERSATION:

2. QUOTE. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSING QUESTION OF CAMBODIAN LIAISON WITH USSAG/7 TH AF, GENERAL KRIANGSAK SAID THAT RTG HAD BEEN INVITED TO JOIN THE TRIPARTITE MEETINGS, BUT THAT CAMBODIAN GENERAL FAN MUONG HAS TOLD HIM THAT THE US REPRESENTATIVE TOOK POSITION THAT IT IS NOT YET TIME FOR THAILAND TO JOIN. KRIANGSAK REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT IF IT IS NOT TIME FOR RTG TO KNOW THE SITUATION BY PARTICIPATING IN THESE MEETINGS, IT IS NOT THE TIME FOR RTG TO GET INVOLVED IN ANY AIR OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA. THAILAND DID NOT WANT TO BE " FLYING BLIND" THERE.

3. MR. MULLER SOUGHT TO MOLLIFY KRIANGSAK BY SUGGESTING THAT THE DASC IS GEARED TO COORDINATE AIR OPERATIONS AND THAT THE RTG HAS ITS BILATERAL CONTACTS WITH CAMBODIA TO LEARN WHAT IS GOING ON THERE. HE NOTED THAT THE TRIPARTITE GROUP CONCERNS ITSELF WITH SUCH MATTERS AS COORDINATING THE VIETNAMESE AND US AIR FORCES IN CONNECTION WITH

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THE MEKONG RIVER OPERATIONS. ALLUDING TO THAI PARTICIPATION IN RICE AND AMMUNITION CONVOYS UP THE MEKONG, KRIANGSAK INSISTED THAT THE RTG IS GREATLY INTERESTED IN SUCH MATTERS.

4. KRIANGSAK SAID THAT THE CAMBODIANS HAD ASKED WHETHER, IN LIGHT OF PRESENT OR FUTURE RESTRICTIONS ON TRIPARTITE MEETINGS IN SAIGON AND PHNOM PENH, BANGKOK MIGHT BECOME THE VENUE. KRIANGSAK SAID THE RTG HAD INDICATED IT WOULD WELCOME THE MEETINGS HERE, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WOULD CERTAINLY EXPECT THAI PARTICIPATION. END QUOTE.

5. QUESTION OF THAI INVOLVEMENT IN CAMBODIAN AIR OPERATIONS IS LONG-STANDING AND WAS SUBJECT OF CONSIDERABLE GKR/ RTG EARLIER DISCUSSION

ON FORWARD BASING RTAF T-28' S AT REAM FOR MEKONG CONVOY ESCORT TO PHNOM PENH. IN FEBRUARY (BANGKOK 2473, PARA 5) LTG KRIANGSAK, WHILE REITERATING LONGSTANDING THAI COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE AIR STRIKES WHEN

REQUESTED BY GKR, STATED REAM FORWARD BASING DEFINITELY OUT BECAUSE

AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD TAKE ANOTHER YEAR. MOVEMENT OF DASC TO

PHNOM PENH FROM BATTAMBANG TO FACILITATE RAPID PASSING OF STRIKE REQUESTS TO THAIS HAS ALSO NOT YET BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. WE HAVE PURPOSELY NOT PUSHED KRIANGSAK ON THAI AIR SUPPORT BECAUSE OF OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR THAI ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA AND IN KEEPING WITH OUR BASIC POLICY OF NOT GETTING AHEAD OF ANY ARRANGEMENTS GKR AND RTG WORK OUT THEMSELVES. WE ALSO MUST CONSIDER THAT LOSS OF ANY

RTAF AIRCRAFT WOULD FOCUS UNDESIRABLE PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THAI SUPPORT.

6. KRIANGSAK HAS NOT RAISED QUESTION OF RTG PARTICIPATION IN TRIPARTITE

FORUM SINCE APRIL. HE HAS HOWEVER REQUESTED AND COMUSSAG HAS AGREED

TO THAI MILITARY LIAISON OFFICERS BEING ASSIGNED AT NAKHOM PHANOM, ONE TO USSAG AND ONE TO JCRC. ALTHOUGH KRIANGSAK HAS NOT YET NOMINATED OFFICERS FOR THESE LIAISON FUNCTIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT THEIR ASSIGNMENT MAY HAVE AT LEAST TEMPORARILY RELIEVED HIS CONCERN OVER BEING LEFT OUT OF TRIPARTITE MEETINGS.

7. IN SUM, IT CONTINUES TO BE OUR ASSESSMENT THAT CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

ARE TOLERABLE TO RTG AND RTG/ GKR BILATERAL COOPERATION IS FUNCTIONING

REASONABLY SMOOTHLY. UNLESS KRIANGSAK SURFACES ISSUE AGAIN, WE DO NOT SEE ANY PRESSING REASON FOR THE USG TO FOSTER EXPANSION OF WHAT COULD VERY WELL BE MISINTERPRETED AS A NEW FOUR- NATION MILITARY

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ALIGNMENT UNDER US SPONSORSHIP. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE SHOULD BE
ALERT
TO ALL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE LOCAL INITIATIVES TO FOSTER
MILITARY,

AS WELL AS POLITICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THAILAND AND THREE
INDOCHINA
NATIONS, INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT OF TRIPARTITE CONTACTS AMONG
THAILAND, RVN AND GKR.
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